



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)
Deadline for Nominations: March 3, 2015

Program Excellence Award Category (select only one):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated:	City of Edmonton Corporate Culture Program
Jurisdiction(s) where program originated:	City of Edmonton
Jurisdiction population(s):	877,926 (Municipality) 1,243,000 (Metropolitan Area)

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented.

(Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month	January	Year	2013
Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):			
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BUILDING A GREAT CITY

Edmonton's Corporate Culture Journey



Redefining
Leadership

2010



2011

Build Common Language
& Approach



Commitment to
Education & Learning

2012



2013

Sharing Ideas,
Keeping on Track



Involve
Everyone

2014



2015

Merge Business &
Action Plans



2015 ICMA Award Submission
City of Edmonton

Building a Great City

Edmonton's Corporate Culture Journey

Introduction

The City of Edmonton has set out on a step-by-step journey over the past five years to build a more productive, engaged and collaborative workplace culture.

Our City Council has set a clear direction for Edmonton through six strategic goals. This plan, The Way Ahead, was developed with input from thousands of Edmontonians. They have high expectations for our Administration to not only continue delivering excellent municipal services, but to also transform many aspects of the City.

Reaching these goals will take the full effort of every individual in our workforce. As an organization of 12,000 employees, establishing a shared set of principles and values was a challenging task.

We believe that employees who understand where the organization is headed and who know they have permission to innovate to get to that goal, will be more engaged and therefore more productive.

Guiding our workplace culture is a key business strategy at the City of Edmonton. The steps we have taken can be scaled up or down for any size of organization; while the implementation may be slightly different, the principles carry over.

Our Five Year Journey

2010 REDEFINE WHAT LEADERSHIP MEANS TO US

The work began with senior leaders. Our first step was the City's leadership team of six General and 30 Branch Managers having an intensive six-month discussion of how they work as a team. They agreed that from that point on, their role was to make decisions that are in the best interest of the organization and Edmonton as a whole, not to represent their individual departments.

This newly define Corporate Leadership Team then charged the next level of management, the Branch Managers with a new role as well. They would work as a team to collaborate on services needs and emerging issues by:

- Sharing resources and information
- Testing ideas
- Offering diverse perspectives
- Modeling corporate culture values

The first assignment to the new team was to redesign the City's organizational structure. This process was led by our Branch Managers. Working together they developed a structure where our form best suits our functions: collaborating on delivering services to citizens.

2011

BUILD A COMMON LANGUAGE & APPROACH FOR LEADERS

In order for our leaders to act as a team, they needed to agree on a common language, approach and patterns behaviour. The Corporate Leadership Team began with a shared set of principles and an expectation of anyone in a leadership role at the City:

A leader is a visionary, credible and trusted role model who inspires and challenges others to achieve their full potential. Our five principles guide our behaviour as leaders to reflect that:

- We are one city
- We are proud to serve the public
- As stewards we lead
- We do as we say
- I make a difference every day

The Leadership Effectiveness Initiative saw employees engaged in developmental activities focused on contemporary concepts in leadership including complexity theory, polarity mapping, resonant leadership and change management.

Celebration and recognition of the leadership of our employees through their outstanding achievements was addressed through the creation of the City Manager's Awards of Excellence, along with several other recognition programs. The City Manager's Awards showcases employees who exemplify excellence in public service. These nominees (individuals and teams) are peer-nominated, and are profiled in videos and internal communication campaign as well as recognized at a formal awards event with their families and colleagues. The number of nominations have seen a steady increase since the program's inception in 2011. In 2014, over 105 nominations representing almost 500 employees were submitted.

2012

COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION & LEARNING

Although we purposefully began our work with our leadership group in order to build their support, it was also work with employees at the front lines.

In 2012 the Culture Ambassadors Program established a network of culture 'champions' at the grassroots level. Employees who were passionate about transforming how we work to better serve our citizens and each other were oriented and trained to act as communicators, resource guides and culture "pulse takers."

The groups operate in cross-functional cohorts to support one another and receive regular check-ins to learn new skills and share their successes. From humble beginnings with a group of 65 ambassadors the network has grown to almost 400 grassroots culture champions helping us transform our workplaces.

This year also saw the launch of our 'Supervisor 101' program designed to educate and equip our front line supervisors with the foundational tools necessary to lead the shift in culture of their workplaces. While the senior-level managers can set the tone and clarify expectations, it is employees' direct supervisors who carry the most trusted influence and are essential to cultural change.

We created a program of 20 courses developed specifically for City of Edmonton supervisors on topics such as handling tough conversations, change management, and setting performance expectations so that these key functions can be carried out in line with our cultural goals.

2013

SHARE IDEAS, KEEP ON TRACK

With the results of our 2012 biennial Employee Engagement and Diversity Survey 'hot off the presses' we built a process to support the development of culture actions plans.

These plans provided a vehicle at both the operational and corporate level to engage staff in understanding where to focus our transformational efforts. They also enabled us to develop tangible actions plans to improve the experience of employees in our workplaces and shift our culture.

It was also a time to share ideas about what culture transformation looks like in our day-to-day work. This was definitely a job for our Culture Ambassadors!

With support from the Corporate Culture Office the Ambassador network sprang into action and delivered a culture fair at our inaugural Great City Event to share their transformative work and inspire and engage our leaders.

This fair was followed by a panel discussion with the Corporate leadership team sharing their thoughts on the culture of our organization.

2014

INVOLVE EVERYONE

We want every employee at the City of Edmonton to understand the vision our Council has created for our community and to see how his or her individual job contributes to reaching that goal.

This means communication is key. In order to better share the City's story with our staff, we renamed, relaunched, and refocused our intranet with a pictorial storytelling theme strongly focused on our greatest asset, our employees. The new OneCity intranet site, the accompanying Great City News publication and Google+ online community is sharing our story with more employees than ever before.

We organized a series of events for staff, including the Great City Event, which focused on a group of 900 Supervisors and provided a chance to network, experience a key note speaker on what makes cities lovable and wander around our culture fair featuring booths from all branches telling the story of how their workplace has transformed their culture.

It was also the venue where our Six-word Stories campaign was launched. This campaign has really captured the imagination of employees who have submitted over two thousand creative six-word stories telling the tale of what they do and how it makes a difference to the citizens we serve. These submissions, shared on our newly launched Google+ employee social network, came from across the organization, in all departments including front line staff, supervisors and management. These stories are proudly displayed throughout our City's work environments and serve as individual mottos of how each employee is helping to build a great city.

2015

MERGE CULTURE & BUSINESS PLANS

Our culture work is one of our key business strategies. In 2015 we are formalizing the relationship between culture and our business goals by integrating our culture action plans and transformative activities with our business plans and budget cycle.

A range of planning processes, tools and engagements have been created in a coordinated fashion to embed our culture transformation work into our day-to-day business activities.

Tangible Results

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Employees and their experience in working in our organization are the true test of our success.

We contract an independent third-party organization, Talent Map, to administer our survey every two years to ensure confidentiality and objectivity.

We reached a significant milestone in 2014, when our participation rate increased by 50 per cent (an increase of 2000 additional employees), showing a great leap in engagement and trust in the survey. Even with so many new participants, we saw increases in every single one of our 32 dimension questions and all of our diversity groups.

After reviewing all of our 2014 results TalentMap observed that our culture work resulted in employees feeling true positive change, significant engagement increase, and a consistent leadership and management culture across the organization.

The improvement in our Corporate Culture are also being recongized externally. Edmonton is currently named as one of Canada's 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures for 2014 by Waterstone Human Capital in the broader Public Sector category. We are the first municipality to have won this award. This award complements our organizational success in other areas as illustrated by the recognition accorded to us by the Top 65 Alberta Employers award, Canada's Top Diversity Employers award, and Canada's Top Employer's for Young People.

ALIGNING WITH OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

The ultimate outcome of our culture work is to make our Council's strategic goals a reality. One of the most tangible outcomes of our success is our staff working together as one city to reallocate budget dollars to Council's high priority projects.

In the 2014 operating budget, we reallocated \$9.4 million. In total, the savings achieved through innovative approaches and reducing budgets of lower priority programs resulted in \$12 million reallocated positive changes for 2015.

Our culture has reinforced the need to do more with less. We have reduced corporate overhead from 9.0% of tax-supported expenses in 2009 to 8.3% in 2013. At the same time, we are expanding our capacity for doing strategic work. Personnel costs have remained at a stable 58% of operation expenditures for last 10 years.

In the last year we have moved forward not only in terms of city building projects focused on urban intensification and expansion of our Light Rail Transit network, but also in the development of our social conscience as a city, looking at issues of poverty and the need for more education and action we identified through hosting the national Aboriginal Truth and Reconciliation Commission in our city.

Strong alignment with our strategic goals has allowed us to make significant strides in improving the quality of life for our citizens. Over the last four years we have opened four recreational complexes that are over 300,000 sq ft. Edmonton now has an unrivalled collection of recreation facilities. These facilities are about more than fitness -- they are community hubs where all kinds of groups connect.

This theme of connection also extends to the City's partnership with Enerkem at the Waste Management Centre, the result of which is access to the world's first industrial-scale waste-to-biofuels facility. We are on target for our long-term goal of 90% diversion of waste from our landfill by 2016. We continue to be recognized as a leading city in climate change action.

We are making significant strides to open up new channels of sharing information and connecting with our residents. This is seen through initiatives like Open City, which builds on our Open Data Catalog, the Citizen Dashboard which shares information about our outcomes and targets and OpenLab, which is creating new partnerships for collaboration. Our approach to innovation and building a smart city has also been recognized both in 2011 as the first Canadian City to work with IBM as part of the Smarter Cities Challenge and in our recent 2015 designation as one of Smart 21 Communities by the Intelligent Community Forum.

SUMMARY

2010 marked a deliberate movement towards a culture of innovation, collaboration and leadership across our organization. A shift of this magnitude required large-scale changes in the way we operate and communicate, both personally and organizationally.

The corporate culture initiative has had - and continues to have - a significant and transformational impact on the organization. We have seen the impact not only in the progress of large capital projects but also in the development of our social conscience as an organization and as a city. Our changing culture has also changed how our employees approach their work. Our staff are encouraged to understand how their work and ideas contribute to building a great city like Edmonton.

As an organization, we are committed to building an environment that fosters this commitment to public service. Many staff choose to work at the City because they want to directly serve their community and make Edmonton a great place to live. To keep our staff engaged our leaders must continue to reinforce culture through consistent actions and messages. Staff are our greatest resource - and supporting and encouraging them in their roles increases our ability to engage with and provide better services for our citizens.

Our plan going forward is to keep upping the game to increase our tangible results. The City will always work to improve its corporate culture. Simply put, to run an organization without corporate culture plans in place would be like operating a city without roads. We know that if we're not actively working on the culture of the organization, we're missing a piece of the puzzle. Culture is part of our core business - like balancing a budget we need to balance our people and the expectations of our citizens.